

RESOLUTION No. 6111

Resolution to advocate for and approve additional federal education funding for public schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is a monumental and unprecedented challenge, emerging quickly and demanding an immediate overhaul of the instructional plans and strategies of school systems across the country; and

WHEREAS, the nation's public schools remain committed to delivering high-quality instruction while ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff; and

WHEREAS, this challenge will persist and likely grow as COVID-19 affects our economy and destabilizes funding for public schools; and

WHEREAS, economists have predicted the end of the nation's economic expansion and forecast a recession that may be deep and long-lasting; and

WHEREAS, any nationwide recession is likely to affect urban areas and their poorest citizens most severely; and

WHEREAS, the numbers of unemployment claims in Oregon are already the highest we have seen since the Great Depression and may only grow; and

WHEREAS, urban public-school systems across the country are already incurring substantial unexpected costs to provide meal services and purchase and deploy digital instructional devices; and

WHEREAS, urban public-school systems are facing difficult decisions about how to allocate dwindling financial resources to sustain high-quality instruction and other essential services for students and families over the next several years; and

WHEREAS, revenue shortfalls will unequivocally result in budget cuts and personnel reductions in school systems across Oregon;

WHEREAS, these budget cuts will be happening at the same time that public school systems will be working to address the immense instructional challenge of unfinished learning that many students will face coming out of this school year; and

WHEREAS, the American Recovery and Reinvestment ACT (ARRA) of 2009 provided \$100 billion in education funding with investments in both the education stabilization fund and various federal categorical programs for public schools, such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Act; and

WHEREAS, Congress followed ARRA in 2010 with \$10 billion in additional funding for the Education Jobs Fund to help school districts retain existing employees, recall former employees, and hire new ones; and

WHEREAS, by comparison the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides only \$13 billion for education stabilization funding, which is less than half of one percent of the total \$2.2 trillion relief provided in the CARES Act and is far below the investment that the federal government provided in 2009 and 2010 in ARRA and the Education Jobs fund; and

WHEREAS, public education is one of the largest employers of any organization, public or private, in the nation; and

WHEREAS, published economic research has demonstrated a strong connection between a country's GDP growth and its investments in elementary and secondary education; and

WHEREAS, research has repeatedly found a strong causal relationship between levels of schooling and wages that individuals earn over a lifetime; and

April 07, 2020

WHEREAS, for public schools to recover and thrive and for our students to realize a bright and productive future, the federal government needs to make a substantial new investment in our wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Great City Schools, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National Parent Teachers Association, and others have called for some \$200 billion in support for the nation's public schools; and

WHEREAS, this level of funding is the minimum needed by the nation's public schools to sustain and accelerate their academic achievement trends over the past decade,; and

WHEREAS, Portland Public Schools is grateful to our congressional delegation for supporting the CARES Act, which includes approximately \$120 million for Oregon K-12 through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Education Relief Fund (ESSEER); and

WHEREAS, the Portland Public Schools allocation of the ESSEER is \$8.7 million; and

WHEREAS, Portland Public Schools is expected to face a significant budget deficit heading into the 2020-2021 school year;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Portland Public School District calls on its Congressional delegation, including our United States Senators and House of Representative members, to advocate for and approve additional federal education funding for our nation's public schools during this time of unprecedented challenges to our students and their families..

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the Portland Public Schools district at its regular meeting held this day in April 2020.